



City of Annapolis

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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August 25, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Pete Gutwald, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
Re: West Annapolis Sector Study Update
Attachments: Updated West Annapolis Sector Study and Appendices

INTRODUCTION

The Amended West Annapolis Sector Study Draft (August 20, 2015) addresses the comments of the Planning Commission from November 2014, the date of the initial public hearing. The West Annapolis Sector Study has been modified from the original version by the following:

- Integration the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the starting point and lays the foundation for the purpose of the sector study.
- Refocusing of the traffic analysis on discussing the difference between “regular” congestion that occurs in the afternoon, and “event” congestion, that occurs on Friday afternoons in the summer or during scheduled events in town or on the Eastern Shore. It is now clear that Rt. 50 overflow traffic affects West Annapolis.
- Tightening the market analysis and removing conjecture while keeping the analysis intact. This section now focuses on retail uses and whether additional retail uses could succeed in West Annapolis. The recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan is to make the Opportunity Area mixed-use. This would require allowing more retail uses in the parts of West Annapolis closest to Rowe Blvd.
- Expanding the land use analysis to include a more thorough analysis of the proposed land use in the Comprehensive Plan. It also looks at existing zoning and how that would need to change to encourage more mixed use. The sections on urban design, recreation, and bicycling and pedestrian facilities have also been expanded.

In March 2015, the revised study was sent to Planning Commission for review. In April 2015, staff met with the Chair of the Planning Commission and the Alderman of Ward Two to discuss the revisions. The Chair requested renderings showing the “Urban Center Low Concept” and other suggestions from the Comprehensive Plan. In July 2015, staff came to the Planning Commission with a graphic artist to discuss renderings and further refinements. In August 2015, staff met with the West Annapolis Civic Association Board to review changes to the study.

AMENDED STUDY

The August 20, 2015 version incorporates additional updates to the Land Use Section, including two renderings that capture the design aesthetic for the Opportunity Area as described in the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter has also been expanded to include additional images that help further explain and promote the ideas and recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan and the Sector Study.

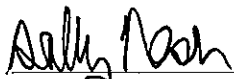
The changes in the study include:

1. P. ii Executive Summary: Defined recurring (i.e., rush hour or “nonevent”) and non-recurring (i.e., special event or “event”) from the beginning to avoid confusion
2. P. iii: Clarified that “new” retail primarily includes redevelopment and/or enhanced performance of existing retail
3. P. iii: Added language that new dwelling units would need to be compatible with community character. Generally toned down “market” discussion
4. P. iii: Study the feasibility of adding a cycle-track along Melvin, to improve separation between bicyclists and vehicular traffic
5. P. iv: Added language about pursuing “floating docks at street ends to improve water access”
6. P. 1 and 3: Added outline of the opportunity area (the part designated as Urban Center Low) and a new graphic close-up of the opportunity area. Included the reasons for designating the opportunity area and the recommendations for the opportunity area
7. Each section now begins with the recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan
8. P. 9: The traffic section now includes additional comments from public input regarding traffic concerns. This section focuses on:
 - period traffic congestion, handling US 50 overflow traffic
 - enhancing access to and circulation within West Annapolis (including internal neighborhood circulation and safety)
9. P. 9: Re-worded introductory paragraph for clarity, “The data presented in this report illustrates that there is not an adequate balance at this time, and that local circulation suffers as a result. This study also outlines several local strategies that could improve mobility. However, the State Highway Association must partner with the City for a successful outcome.”
10. The study was scrubbed of broad policy notions and fixes that involve physical changes outside the immediate area and emphasized local solutions to local issues. In the traffic section, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and operational improvements are now strongly emphasized
11. P. 17: Added more explanation of the “travel time runs.” These were four runs that were performed in each direction along each route. The selection of routes for alternative corridors to evaluate for travel time advantages/disadvantages in comparison to US 50, were made by looking for very different route alignments, not just short-link diversions of a few blocks. Therefore, the Rowe Blvd. to Melvin Ave. to MD 450 Route was not additionally tested with the Rowe Blvd. to MD 450 through West Annapolis Route. However, there were turning movement counts collected at each intersection within the neighborhood street grid that captures the additional traffic flow during event peaks
12. Generally refocused traffic section to emphasize ITS and other ways to manage traffic
13. Moved pedestrian/bike/transit discussion to the Land Use section so it would not get lost in the transportation chapter
14. P. 14: Highlighted explanation for Level-of Service
15. Checked all labels of intersections to ensure proper labeling

16. P. 39: Added that any major road improvements should also include the addition of a bike lane in 450 that ties in with the existing bike lane on the Naval Academy Bridge. The bike lane should continue to King George Street and to Annapolis Street. This would connect downtown, West Annapolis, and the B&A Trail
17. P. 41: Began section with Comprehensive Plan recommendations and refocused discussion to focus on retail uses. Reorganized some demographic information
18. Focused on emphasizing that the opportunity area should include the following as most likely successful:
 - Furniture, especially antiques
 - Limited service restaurants
 - Smaller full service restaurants
 - Health and Beauty, and Related
 - Personal Fitness Studios
19. P. 61-62: Emphasized the importance of “the context of the village feel and the architecture and location of new density would need to be developed with close cooperation and input from the community.”
20. P. 63: Started Land Use Section with discussion of Comprehensive Plan
21. P. 63: New graphic emphasizing Rowe Blvd. as gateway into the City
22. P. 65: Included a new section on existing land use and zoning and what is proposed in the Comprehensive Plan. Discusses what kind of zoning changes would be needed to allow more mixed use
23. P. 68: New table of zoning districts and what is permitted
24. P. 69: New discussion of urban design and aesthetics
25. P. 70: New graphic and text showing a rendering of “urban center low” along Rowe Blvd.
26. P. 71: New graphic showing Taylor/Rowe Blvd intersection with pedestrian bridge and enhanced pedestrian crossing
27. P. 72: Separated the discussion of the retail areas outside of the Opportunity area, i.e. Annapolis Street
28. P. 72: Discussed previous streetscape plan in more detail
29. P. 75: New graphic showing a 5 and a 10 minute walk from the Rowe Blvd./Taylor intersection
30. P. 75: Added a more in-depth discussion of alternate modes of transportation—bike, pedestrian, and transit
31. P. 75: Elaborated on: As part of the redevelopment of the opportunity area, therefore, there would be many opportunities to have sidewalks and recreational areas be more than an afterthought. It may be necessary to work with the Naval Academy to widen the sidewalk and improve the formidable (for pedestrians) intersection of Taylor and MD 450
32. P. 75: Floating dinghy docks in Weems Creek, in the vicinity of the Tucker Street boat ramp or at other street ends. Added public access language
33. P. 78: Added: Utility poles obstruct sidewalks throughout West Annapolis
34. P. 79-80: Added a recommendation for a cycle track on Melvin and added an image of a cycle track
35. P. 80: Elaborated on: Badger Road/Shiley Street: Connect the MD 450/Naval Academy Bridge bikeway to West Annapolis by installing a signed bike route along Badger Road to Shiley Street to Melvin Avenue
36. P. 80: Added new image of a parklet

37. P. 87: Clarified: Install floating docks adjacent and connected to street ends, including the Tucker Street boat ramp. These docks would provide access for paddlers, and could also be used as crabbing/fishing sites.

Report Prepared by



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